

RevConNews



Day 7 – Wednesday 5 July

2006 Review Conference at risk of failure?

Response from IANSA to the President's Non-paper of 3 July 2006

The President's Non-paper of 3 July is intended to reflect progress since last week towards agreeing a 'forward-looking outcome' document for the 2006 Review Conference. The lives of millions are at stake, yet it seems that the negotiation process is going backwards. The tone of the document as a whole, as well as numerous specific omissions, represents a weakening of the commitments in the Programme of Action itself. If the Review Conference adopts the current draft, it risks having no impact on those most affected by gun violence.

IANSA recognises that the Chair is in a most unenviable position attempting to produce a positive outcome. We urge all States to assist him by demonstrating focus and commitment in the little time remaining.

The 3 July Non-paper omits much of what was good in the previous version (27 June), which itself was sadly lacking in several respects. Most importantly, the commitment in the June 27 document to 'undertake concrete measures' has gone. States are now agreeing only 'to consider the following measures.'

Incredibly, it also deletes the recognition that 'much more is required to be done to address the illicit trade in SALW in all its aspects.'

These omissions seriously undermine the legitimacy of the process and send the wrong signal about the international community's will to tackle this problem.

IANSA wonders: Which States vetoed these original statements? What is the purpose of debating section II, if States are only 'agreeing to consider' whatever it contains?

Looking at the main commitments from this supposedly 'forward-looking' conference, the Non-paper is now very weak on several key areas.

Development denied

The past five years have seen enormous advances in our understanding of how development is involved in preventing, combating, and eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects. It is therefore a major disappointment to see that the Non-paper reflects virtually nothing of this knowledge and experience.

Gender – still only half the picture

IANSA welcomes the return of a reference to SCR 1325 and women's diverse contributions to small arms control. However, the removal of any reference to men and boys misses a vital part of the picture, since it is men – and young men in particular – that constitute the vast majority of direct victims of small arms violence.

Human rights still suppressed

Illicit trafficking and proliferation of small arms and light weapons fuels gross violations of international human rights law and serious breaches of international humanitarian law. It is absurd that the Non-paper fails to mention these key dimensions of the small arms problem.

International transfers – still out of control

IANSA is extremely disappointed with the provisions on international transfers. We are alarmed by the progressive weakening of commitments on this topic in the various iterations of the Non-paper. The current draft risks doing nothing to stem the supply of small arms to those who would use them for atrocities.

Strengthening national firearms legislation – nothing to do with implementing the PoA?

The deletion of II.2 and II.4 significantly weakens the document, by removing almost all reference to national laws. The pressure to remove these paragraphs comes no doubt from the narrow domestic concerns of two States who are out of step with international standards related to national small arms control regimes. This should not obstruct progress on a topic of vital interest to the majority of UN Member States.

Stockpile management and security

The commitment to develop best practices on stockpile management and destruction has been deleted (II.33 in 27 June draft). IANSA wonders which States objected to this modest and practical proposal.

The 'human cost' of rhetoric: Survivors totally ignored

The UN small arms process since 2001 has heard frequent mentions of the human cost of small arms, but this has not been reflected in concrete commitments. This omission ignores the millions of people maimed, disabled, injured and traumatised by small arms.

Unless significant progress is made in the next two days, the conference risks making no difference at all to those millions living under the threat of the gun.

For French and Spanish extracts see page 4

190 member organisations of IANSA have signed a statement calling on the RevCon to recognise the need for assistance to survivors of gun violence. The full statement and list of signatories is available at the IANSA table and will be posted on www.iansa.org shortly.

What's new in Burundi? The Programme of Action in a country in transition

Both civil society and the government in Burundi are very conscious of the effects of the easy access of small arms in the country. They believe that Burundi will never be able to find sustainable peace as long as weapons remain in the hands of the civilian population.

A peace agreement was signed in Arusha, Tanzania, in 2000 after negotiations supported by the international community and the Great Lakes region of Africa. The Burundian government, in collaboration with civil society and with the support of UNDP-Burundi, began a project on the proliferation of illicit small arms and civilian disarmament in April 2006, in line

with the Programme of Action and regional instruments such as the Nairobi Declaration and Protocol. The Small Arms Survey estimates that 100,000 weapons are currently circulating in Burundi; many were distributed to the civilian population during the conflict and continue to wreak destruction. The records of a hospital in Bujumbura managed by MSF Belgium reveal that in 2005, one quarter of patients had gunshot wounds. No financial assistance was available, and these patients were left to pay their own medical bills, which was impossible for the majority of them.

A national strategy on the proliferation of small arms and civilian disarmament has been developed with assistance from UNDP, the United Nations Mission in Burundi (ONUB), customs officials, the World Bank and

representatives from civil society. The strategy covers the legal and institutional control of weapons and weapons collection from the civilian population. A disarmament campaign was also launched, and the government aims to create a fund to assist civilian victims of small arms violence. Several of these priorities are implicit in the Programme of Action, but they are not yet given the attention they deserve.

This is particularly the case with civilian disarmament and assistance to survivors of armed violence. This Review Conference presents the opportunity to formulate strong recommendations and direct the attention of the international community to the problems of states in transition such as Burundi.

Side events today, Wednesday 5 July	Side events tomorrow, Thursday 6 July
Morning	Morning
Geneva Forum Geneva Forum 9am (Conf Room 6)	Geneva Forum Geneva Forum 9am (Conf Room 6)
Lunchtime	Lunchtime
Implementing National Firearms Legislation: Lessons Learned since 2001 IANSA (Conf Room C)	Ensuring Effective Follow-on IANSA (Conf Room C)
Lessons Learned: The Latin American Context CLAVE (Conf Room 4)	A Study of Parliamentary SALW Engagement Parliamentary Forum (Conf Room 4)
The Scope & Implementations of Developing a Mechanism to Prevent Illicit Brokering DDA/UNIDIR/SAS (Conf Room 6)	Guidance on Small Arms and Armed Violence United Kingdom OECD DAC (Conf Room E)
Meeting of French-speaking Delegations Caritas Internationalis (Dag Hammarskjöld Library Auditorium)	Beyond the PoA: Addressing Gun Control in Fragile States BICC (Conf Room 6)
No Refuge: The Crisis of Refugee Militarisation in Africa Small Arms Survey (Conf Room E)	

IANSA key side event: National Firearms Legislation

Civilians hold 60% of the world's supply of small arms. Preventing diversion of these weapons to illegal markets is essential for effective and full implementation of the PoA. In practice this requires the regulation of all aspects of the manufacture, sale, possession, storage and use of small arms. Numerous regional agreements and declarations are already recognising this, a number of states are already sharing lessons learned, and there is growing convergence on minimum standards.

When: Today, 1:15pm
Where: Conference room C

IANSA key side event: Follow-on mechanisms

The 2006 Review Conference will decide the form and aims of follow-on mechanisms to guide multilateral efforts on small arms and light weapons control for the next decade. It is crucial that these mechanisms facilitate creative and effective action to address the complex phenomena of weapons availability and misuse, and reflect the full range of small arms issues upon which international action is required, including those specified in the 2001 PoA and those areas of action that – while not mentioned explicitly – have proven essential to effective action.

When: Tomorrow, 1:15pm
Where: Conference room C

Perspectives

Commentary: Getting the process back on track

Owen Greene, University of Bradford, UK

Something went badly wrong during 1 – 3 July with the RevCon negotiating process. On Friday, 30 June, facilitators were asked by the President to conduct informal consultations to try to resolve differences and refine his June 27 non-paper. Difficult issues remained, but the process seemed to be on track.

But when the President's new non-paper appeared at Monday noon, 3 July, things seemed to be falling apart. Not all facilitators had been available during the key consultation period, and most concerned parties were taken by surprise by the gaps in the new non-paper. Important widely-supported recommendations had been dropped or ignored without clear reason.

Even more strangely, significant paragraphs to which little objection had been publicly expressed were deleted or greatly weakened. For example, an important recommendation for follow-on action to improve stockpile security and destruction had been removed for no obvious reason. Several key recommendations need to be restored before serious negotiations can start towards final text.

Problems are inevitable in UN negotiations. Some delegations get confused, and others that want to block progress have become skilled at creating confusion and delay. On Monday afternoon, it became painfully clear that line-by-line discussion in plenary is not going to produce the agreements needed by Friday.

Ambassador Kariyawasam, the President, commands wide respect on all sides, and the process can be recovered. From Wednesday morning, plenary discussions should focus on small clusters of related paragraphs for a limited time. Then some key parties should immediately work informally (with an expanded set of facilitators) to try resolve drafting problems, while the plenary moves on to the next cluster of paragraphs. This will not only ensure that the plenary discussion proceeds at the required pace, but also that concerned parties will recognise any compromise texts in the President's next draft paper for the final phase of negotiations

In the meantime, every delegation should avoid objecting to widely-supported recommendations that they can live with. Suggestions for improved or compromise text are always

welcome. But vetoes should be rare; fully and publicly justified; and not accepted by the President until it is clear that this is essential.

Commentary: National gun laws – Latin American perspectives

Denis Mizne, Sou da Paz, Brazil

Latin America is the region of the world most dramatically affected by small arms related violence – 60% of global firearm homicides occur in this region (Small Arms Survey 2004). The majority of direct victims are young men, aged from 15 to 24, who are taken out of economic and family life. Notably, the majority of Latin American countries do not face internal armed conflict, rather extremely high levels of urban violence.

As with elsewhere in the world, the majority of small arms are in the hands of civilians and almost all of them were introduced into the market legally. Therefore, the issue of regulating access to, and possession of small arms cannot be ignored by this Conference.

Strengthening national firearms legislation, including at a bare minimum encouragement to license weapons, restrict certain types and quantity of weapons civilians can own and carry, and measures to prevent diversion to the illegal market, should certainly be a part of the Outcome Document. Controls on, and the marking of ammunition are also fundamental to the overall goal of this meeting which is supposedly aimed at doing all that is necessary to prevent the illicit trafficking and the misuse of small arms all over the world.

CLAVE, the Latin American Coalition of NGOs to Prevent Armed Violence, has strongly pushed for this issue to be a central element on the global strategy to prevent armed violence. All Latin American governments have clearly stated so at the recently adopted "Antigua Declaration". It is however not just a regional preoccupation, as some 70% of States worldwide have reported on their efforts to strengthen or enforce legislation since 2001 as part of PoA implementation efforts. The call for sensible controls on the sale and use of small arms is an urgent priority if we are to build safer societies. When there is something in our reach to directly save lives, can we afford to ignore it?

Vox pop: What do you think this conference can achieve?

Agnès Marcaillou, DDA

We need to see the Programme of Action in action at the sub-regional level. We have all acknowledged the value of the regional approach – five years later we still have to turn that acknowledgement into concrete measures. The letter of the PoA has yet to be translated into the local political and cultural level. This is where the UN has an added value in facilitating the political, social and cultural translation of the PoA into concrete measures.

Henrik Randehed, Swedish Peace and Arbitration Society

We want a much stronger emphasis on human rights standards here. Human rights must be linked to any arms transfers.

Brian Rawson, Oxfam

The delivery of the Million Faces Petition to this conference has put the human face and the human impact front and centre, for the delegates as well as for the media and public. Those million faces are watching and expecting governments to commit to stricter guidelines on arms transfers.

Daniël Prins, the Netherlands

What we want to achieve here is a framework for seriously getting started with implementing the PoA. That does include building capacity, really assisting and cooperating and coordinating the action. And of course, that does include linking development to this issue and to the outcome document.

Andy Rachmianto - Indonesia

The President's non-paper gives a good indication of what this conference will achieve. NAM is only focusing on part 3 of the document, and we can agree to the 12 paragraphs in the new non-paper, although several paragraphs can be strengthened.

For example, we believe the international financial institutions have their own mandates and certain types of references might complicate small arms projects. NAM is very supportive of the need for follow up to this process, and the essence of what we think is possible and useful – such as groups of governmental experts and gatherings in the UN - are also reflected in the paper.

La Conférence de Révision de 2006 risque-t-elle l'échec ? Réponse de IANSA au Non-paper du Président du 3 juillet 2006

Le Non-paper du Président du 3 juillet cherche à refléter les progrès enregistrés depuis la semaine dernière en vue de l'adoption d'un document final « tourné vers l'avenir ». Des millions de vies sont en jeu, et pourtant il semble que le processus de négociation soit en train de reculer. Le ton du document, ainsi que de nombreuses omissions spécifiques, représentent un affaiblissement des engagements contenus dans le Programme d'Action lui-même. Si la Conférence de Révision adopte la version actuelle du document final, elle risque de n'avoir aucun impact sur ceux qui sont affectés par la violence par armes à feu.

IANSA reconnaît que le Président se trouve dans la position très peu enviable d'avoir à mener la conférence vers une issue positive. Nous enjoignons tous les Etats à l'assister en se concentrant sur cette tâche et en démontrant un engagement fort dans le peu de temps qu'il nous reste.

Le Non-paper du 3 juillet omet bien des dispositions qui avaient été jugées bonnes dans la version précédente (27 juin), qui elle-même ne reflétait pas plusieurs aspects importants. Avant tout, l'engagement figurant dans le document du 27 juin d'« entreprendre des mesures concrètes » a été supprimé. Les Etats maintenant simplement « acceptent de considérer les mesures suivantes ». Il est incroyable que le document ne reconnaisse plus « qu'il est nécessaire de faire bien davantage pour faire face au commerce illicite des armes légères sous ses aspects ».

Ces omissions compromettent gravement la légitimité du processus et envoient un mauvais signal sur la volonté de la communauté internationale de s'attaquer à ce problème. IANSA se demande : quels sont les Etats qui ont imposé leur veto à ces dispositions ? Quel est le but de débattre de la section II, si les Etats ne font qu'« accepter de considérer » ce qu'elle contiendra ? Considérant les obligations principales continues dans cette conférence supposément « tournée vers l'avenir », ce Non-paper apparaît particulièrement faible dans plusieurs domaines clés :

- Le développement ;
- la question du genre ;
- les droits humains et le droit international humanitaire ;
- les transferts internationaux ;
- les législations nationales sur les armes ;
- la gestion des stocks ; et,
- les survivants de la violence par armes à feu.

En matière de mesures de suivi, le Non-paper contient une base pour de bonnes recommandations, qui doivent être préservées et renforcées. IANSA soutient comme mesure minimale l'organisation de deux Réunions d'Action sur la Mise en Œuvre, dont le mandat devra leur permettre d'énoncer des recommandations pour l'Assemblée générale.

A moins que des progrès significatifs ne soient faits dans les deux prochains jours, la conférence risque de ne faire aucune différence pour les millions de personnes qui vivent sous la menace des armes légères.

¿La Conferencia de Revisión 2006 en riesgo de fracasar? Respuesta de IANSA al borrador del documento del Presidente del 3 de Julio del 2006

El borrador del documento del presidente del 3 de Julio intenta reflejar los progresos de la última semana en busca de acordar un documento de « resultados más avanzados ». Millones de vidas están en juego, y sin embargo parece que el proceso de negociaciones está retrocediendo. El tono del documento en general, así como las numerosas omisiones específicas, representan en sí mismas un debilitamiento de los compromisos contenidos en el Programa de Acción. Si la Conferencia de Revisión adopta el borrador actual, existe el riesgo de que no hubiera impacto alguno sobre las vidas de aquellos afectados por la violencia armada.

IANSA reconoce que el Presidente no está en una posición envidiable para intentar producir un resultado positivo. Nosotros exhortamos a los Estados a ayudarlo demostrando en el poco tiempo que queda, su enfoque y compromiso.

El borrador del documento del 3 de Julio omite mucho de lo que era bueno de la versión anterior del 27 de junio, en la cual ya lamentablemente faltaban varios temas. Principalmente el compromiso adoptado en el borrador del 27 de junio para « Comprometerse a medidas concretas » se ha eliminado. Los Estados ahora solo están acordando « considerar las siguientes medidas ». Sorprendentemente, esto además elimina el reconocimiento de que « se necesita mucho más por hacer para atender el tráfico ilícito de Armas Pequeñas y Ligeras en todos sus aspectos ».

Estas omisiones socavan seriamente la legitimidad del proceso y envían una señal equivocada sobre la voluntad de la comunidad internacional para combatir este problema. IANSA cuestiona: ¿cuáles Estados vetaron las declaraciones originales? ¿Cuál es el propósito de debatir la sección II, si los Estados están solo « acordando considerar » el resto del contenido?

Considerando los principales compromisos de esta Conferencia que supuestamente mira al futuro, el borrador del documento presenta debilidad en varias áreas clave incluyendo:

- El desarrollo
- La cuestión de género
- los derechos humanos y el derecho internacional humanitario
- las transferencias internacionales
- las legislaciones nacionales sobre armas de fuego
- la gestión del almacenamiento, y
- los sobrevivientes de la violencia por armas de fuego.

El borrador del documento contiene la base de las recomendaciones para los mecanismos de seguimiento los cuales requieren ser tanto reforzados como ampliados. IANSA apoya la conveniencia como mínimo, de dos Reuniones de Acción para la Implementación las cuales deben de tener mandato para hacer recomendaciones a la Asamblea General.

A menos que se haga un progreso significativo en los siguientes dos días, la conferencia está en riesgo de no generar una diferencia para todos aquellos millones que viven bajo la amenaza de las armas de fuego.

Number of people killed at gunpoint since the RevCon began: 9,000

